



Library of the Theological Seminary,

PRINCETON, N. J.

Presented by N. Murray.

Set

Acq

Shelf

555
5576



Intemperance, a just cause for alarm and exertion.

12
A

SERMON,

PREACHED AT WEST SPRINGFIELD,

April 5th, 1827,

THE DAY OF

THE ANNUAL FAST.

BY

WILLIAM B. SPRAGUE,

PASTOR OF THE FIRST CHURCH IN WEST SPRINGFIELD.

NEW-YORK:

PRINTED BY J. SEYMOUR, JOHN-STREET.

1827.

S E R M O N.

PSALM CXIX. 158.

I beheld the transgressors, and was grieved.

THIS passage contains a faithful expression of the feelings of every good man, in view of the prevalence of irreligion. Whether it be open and flagrant crime, which sets at defiance human law ; or whether it be error, perverting the intellect, and winding its deadly way through the whole moral system ; or whether it be only that good-natured inconsideration, which sits down contented, while the soul is in fearful jeopardy ;—in either case, the good man beholds it, and is grieved. He is grieved at the dishonor which the wicked man casts upon God ; at the pernicious influence which he exerts upon society ; at the evils which he brings upon himself in the present life ; and especially, at the more fearful evils which await him in the eternal world.

But, while the text is a fair representation of the feelings of *good men*, in view of the prevalence of irreligion in its most extended sense, it speaks the feelings of many others in respect to the prevalence of gross immorality ; for it

does not require that a man should be taught by the spirit of God, in order to perceive that vice, in any form, must exert a bad influence upon society. Hence it is, that in the heart of many a man, who never felt an emotion of love to God or love to souls, we may still find a powerful advocate for external morality: and the ear that will not listen, and the heart that will not beat, to considerations drawn from the eternal destiny of man, will yet hear and feel other considerations, which have a bearing, principally, upon his present existence.

In the following discourse, I shall limit the application of the text to a single vice, viz. **INTEMPERANCE**. And it is a subject, in the discussion of which I am happy to feel that I shall have enlisted on my side, not merely the pious sensibilities of the christian, but the lofty aspirings of the patriot, the tender sentiments of kindred, and the favorable regards of every well-wisher of society. To every heart within these walls, that mourns when God is dishonored—that deprecates the future miseries of the lost—that desires the promotion of public or private happiness, or that sympathizes in human wo,—I would appeal in behalf of the object for which I am now to address you.

I shall endeavor to show—

- I. That *the evil which this subject contemplates, furnishes ground for serious alarm* ;
- II. That *every one has a duty to perform in relation to it* ; and,
- III. Illustrate *the obligation which binds to this duty*.

I. I am, first, to show that *the evil which this subject contemplates, furnishes ground for serious alarm.* This will appear whether we consider its *nature*, or its *extent*.

Suppose a monster in human form, should find his way into your dwelling; and, first of all, should cast an evil eye upon your property, and by a series of efforts, should succeed in cheating you to your last farthing. And not satisfied with having made you a beggar, suppose he should go out into the world, still farther to injure your character, and should succeed in making you an object of universal contempt. Suppose he should cause some paralyzing process to pass upon your intellect, and should prematurely reduce you to a state of mental imbecility. Suppose, farther, he should form a design against your life; and either by mingling poison with your food, or plunging a dagger into your heart, or by some other means, should bring you to the grave. And more than all, suppose he had the power to cast your soul into hell; and actually should be the direct instrument of your eternal destruction. And, finally, suppose that in consequence of this malignant agency, you should leave to a helpless family the sad legacy of poverty, disgrace, and wretchedness.

But, what if this monster, having done his work of destruction in *your* family, should pass to that of your neighbor, and should spread through another dwelling the gloom of poverty, and should banish from it the smile of cheerfulness, and should open its doors for the king of terrors to come in, and should send another immortal soul to the region of eternal suffering, and should doom another family to the perpetual agony of a broken heart! And

what if he should enter yet another dwelling, and another, on the same fatal errand, and should extend his circuit from the neighborhood to the town, from the town to the State, from the State to the whole country, and his approach should every where be the signal for mourning, desolation, and wo;—if such a monster were actually abroad among us, I ask you whether a most serious alarm would not pervade this whole community; and whether every man, woman, and child, would not, according to their several ability, lift up a standard against him?

Now, my hearers, you have only to strip this monster of his human form, to have the very monster which our subject contemplates. His name is *INTemperance*. His birth-place is *hell*. His errand is *destruction*; the destruction of the body, and of the soul. In his train follow poverty and disgrace, widowhood and orphanage. Does any one doubt? Yonder is a family whose head was once beloved at home, and respected abroad. But he became intemperate. And the consequence was, that though the names of *husband* and *father* were still heard in his dwelling, yet they only indicated what he *had been*; and they who thus addressed him, felt that other names than those of *wife* and *children* belonged to *them*—the names of *widow* and *orphans*. His intellect, once vigorous and penetrating, became a mental chaos; and his heart, once alive to every generous emotion, became cold as winter, and hard as adamant. His character was oppressed with a load of ignominy: to the expression of public or private confidence succeeded a withering and universal neglect. His property was gradually diminished, till the last remnant was given to the winds. And when his bloated and crim-

soned visage told that only the dregs of life remained, he was hurried in a fit of intoxication, and by an awful casualty, into the presence of his Judge, charged with the guilt of suicide, in respect both to the body and the soul. And the inheritance which he has left to his family, consists of bitter mortification, abject poverty, and a thousand agonizing recollections.

Now, if this one family were to go forth, and tell the story of their sorrows, as if some strange thing had happened to them, thousands of other families would recognise in it an accurate description of their own experience ; and tens of thousands of widows and orphans would rise up and greet them as companions in suffering. Think not that the evil of which I speak, is confined within narrow limits, or to any particular class. It is the common scourge of our country ; insomuch that hardly a neighborhood is to be found, which does not either furnish its living specimens of the evil, or exhibit monuments of its blasting tendency in blighted hopes and broken hearts. You may find it prevailing in the mansions of the rich, and the cottages of the poor ; in the circles of the vulgar, and the circles of the fashionable. You may see it wasting the vigour of youth, entailing upon early manhood the decrepitude of old age, pouring its curses along the path of gray hairs, and extinguishing all that is delicate, and amiable, and of good report, even in female character.

It were easy to present before you an array of facts on this subject, which were enough to curdle the blood, not of every christian only, but of every patriot, and every philanthropist. A few of the more prominent of these facts must, for the present, suffice. In the city of Boston,

the annual expenditure for ardent spirits is estimated at upwards of two hundred thousand dollars. In the city of New-York, the amount expended in the same way in 1820, was one million, eight hundred and ninety-three thousand and eleven dollars. In this commonwealth, it is ascertained that more than two millions five hundred thousand gallons of distilled liquors are annually consumed, the expense of which is estimated at one million three hundred thousand dollars; and supposing the whole population to be five hundred and fifty thousand, it is more than four gallons for each man, woman, and child. Suppose only three-fourths of this expense, which is considered a moderate estimate, to be set down to the charge of intemperance, it appears that nine hundred and seventy-five thousand dollars are, in this way, lost, and a hundred-fold worse than lost, to this commonwealth, every year. In the United States, it is calculated that more than thirty millions of dollars are expended annually for intoxicating liquors; and the pauperism occasioned by them, costs upwards of twelve millions more; so that, allowing three-fourths of the first mentioned sum to be set to the account of intemperance, it appears that the nation is taxed for the support of this vice, more than thirty-four millions of dollars. It is calculated, moreover, that ten thousand lives are annually sacrificed to it; that more than two hundred thousand persons are diseased and impoverished by it; and that it is the occasion of far the greater part of all the crimes committed in the country. And is it so, that in this land which boasts of its light, and of its freedom, and of its virtue—the most richly favored land on which the sun shines—this debasing, soul-destroying vice has gained

such extensive dominion? Is it so, that we not only tolerate this monster who has come among us, but open our doors and our arms to welcome him, and even pour forth from our treasuries, with fatal generosity, the means of his support? Is it so, that the cries of the widow and the orphan are going up to heaven every hour, and a thousand graves are opening, and the population of the world of wo rapidly increasing, from the prevalence of this vice, and yet the community can slumber over it as an unimportant matter? I cannot doubt, my hearers, that you are all satisfied, whether in view of the nature or extent of this evil, that it furnishes just ground for alarm: of course, you will be prepared to go along with me to the

II. Second division of the discourse, in which I am to show that *every man has a duty to perform in relation to this subject.*

Every man has a duty to perform in relation to *himself*, and in relation to *others*.

I. In relation to *himself*.

And here I begin by remarking, that the *confirmed drunkard* owes it to himself that he abandon his destructive habit *immediately*, and *at once*. It is a rare case that you will find even a drunkard, in his sober moments, justifying a habit of intemperance; and it is no uncommon case to find him apparently sensible of its awful consequences, and even resolving that he will become a temperate man. But it almost always happens that he wishes to take time for it; and alleges as a reason, that the sudden breaking up of so confirmed a habit might give a fatal shock to his constitution. Now, I do not say that, in

making such a declaration, he intends to deceive others ; but I do say, that in forming such a resolution, he actually deceives himself ; and that the event will prove, as has been well observed, that his resolution contains within itself the principle of its destruction. You might as well attempt to lead about an angry lion with a cobweb, or drown the awful roar of the cataract in the sound of a whisper, as to subdue this habit by such feeble means. He who would do any thing to purpose, must begin by putting his heel upon the serpent's head ; by resolutely resisting the most urgent cravings of appetite ; for if he undertake to abandon this habit by little and little, the result will inevitably be that nothing will be done, and he will live and die a drunkard.

Moreover, it is by no means true, in any ordinary case—and in this remark I am supported by the highest medical authority—that a sudden and entire change in this respect would be of fatal tendency. If there be an exception from this, it is only the case of the person, who has already so nearly destroyed by intemperance the principle of vitality, that he must inevitably die soon, let him adopt whatever course he may : and in this case, the question would seem to be, whether he should become the victim of a beastly habit, or should die in the cause of reformation ;—a question of no great importance, as respects the continuance of life, as he might probably die about as soon in the one case as in the other.

Again : There is another class *who cannot be called confirmed drunkards, and yet can hardly be ranked with temperate men* ;—those doubtful characters, about whom good people sometimes whisper to each other their anxious

forebodings, and are afraid to speak out what they believe, lest it should be slander;—those, in short, who have courage enough to take up the adder into their hands, but not enough to let it coil in their bosom. Persons of this character, have a duty to perform of the same kind with that which we have just been contemplating—the duty of *entire abstinence*. Probably they have not yet so much as thought of resigning themselves to a habit of intemperance; nor has it even occurred to them, that the elements of that habit are lurking in what they consider the innocent practice of drinking a little ardent spirits every day. But though they know it not, the fire is already beginning to kindle in their system, and unless it is speedily extinguished, it will rage with an all-consuming energy. There is, humanly speaking, hardly a possibility that they should remain long upon the ground which they now occupy: they will soon either go back to the ranks of temperate men, or go forward to the ranks of confirmed drunkards. Let them, therefore, retreat immediately from this path of the destroyer. Let them have no fellowship with these unfruitful works of darkness, lest they should soon have formed a habit, to forsake which were scarcely less difficult than for the Ethiopian to change his skin, or the leopard his spots.

Again: *Temperate men* have a duty to perform in relation to themselves: it is the duty of *remaining temperate*. Time has been, when almost every person who is now a drunkard, was temperate, and probably had no uncommon thirst for ardent spirits. And how was the change effected? By drinking unnecessarily, while he was yet temperate. Perhaps the unnatural appetite was formed, by mingling

frequently in scenes in which ardent spirits made part of the entertainment; or perhaps by the false notion that the excitement produced by this stimulus is favorable to exertion; or perhaps merely from a careless imitation of the example of others. But clearly the foundation of the intemperate habit was laid, while yet he sustained the character of a temperate man; and it was laid in using strong drink as it has been supposed that temperate men may use it. Where, then, it may be asked, is there any safety? I answer—in abstaining from it entirely where it is not actually necessary; in using it, not to cherish or gratify an appetite, but only for purposes of real utility. No doubt, in some few cases, it is useful as a medicine; and as such, is to be regarded as one of the good gifts of God;—but to persons in health, it has been pronounced, by the most respectable medical authority, to be worse than useless. Let temperate men, therefore, not put their temperance at hazard by dallying with temptation; and if ever they do make unnecessary use of intoxicating liquors, let them recollect, as a rebuke to their presumption, that they are sporting with an enemy which has slain its tens of thousands.

2. But, secondly, every man has a duty to perform on this subject, in relation not to himself alone, but also to *others*.

I observe, particularly—

That it is the duty of all, and especially men of wealth and influence, to withhold intoxicating liquors from their entertainments; and to do what they can to banish from society the mistaken notion that furnishing such liquors is one of the rites of hospitality. I am aware that the practice

to which I here object, is extensively prevalent; and that many a man who would shudder at the thought of giving his sanction, in any way, to intemperance, would think he offended greatly against hospitality, if he should fail to provide for his guests ardent spirits. If, indeed, on account of infirmity, or for any other good reason, they need it, let it be furnished them on the same ground that they should be furnished with any other medicine. But I am constrained to believe that the custom of using it indiscriminately on these occasions, which has so extensively received the sanction of temperate and good men, is one of the many customs in society, which owe their continuance to the fact that they have not been examined. For what benefit can possibly result from it? It does not contribute to health. It does not promote any valuable purpose of social intercourse. It only spreads a snare for those towards whom it is designed as an act of hospitality; for though they may be temperate men, it is never to be forgotten that the same was once true of almost every individual, who is now a drunkard; and that the unnecessary use of ardent spirits, before the appetite has acquired much strength, is usually the commencement of the process by which a habit of intemperance is formed. I repeat, then, let all—let those, especially, in the higher walks of life, the influence of whose example is extensively felt, labor to produce a change of public sentiment on this subject. Let your friends see that you can greet them with a cordial welcome, though you place no intoxicating liquor before them. Banish this single custom from society, and you will have done much, very much, towards the suppression of intemperance.

Again: *It is the duty of all who employ laborers, to endeavor, to the extent of their power, to deter them from the use of ardent spirits.* I am aware that I shall be told that such stimulus is necessary for laboring persons: so it has been regarded; and so, to a great extent, it is regarded still. But I am constrained to believe that this also is a mistake. Is it reasonable to suppose that our Creator, who has doomed man to procure his sustenance by the sweat of his brow, should have given him such a constitution as to require the constant use of an unnatural stimulus to sustain him in the labor to which he is destined? I think every considerate person must answer, 'No.' It is not denied that a person under the immediate excitement produced by strong liquor, may labor with an increased degree of energy; but it is a law of our constitution that an excited state, whether of body or mind, must, unless the cause is continued or repeated, be of short continuance; and that, whenever it subsides, there is a depression of the system, proportioned to its previous elevation. There is, therefore, to say the least, in regard to capacity for labor, as much lost on the one hand as there is gained on the other; for even if the stimulus be constantly applied for a given period, yet whenever that period closes, there must succeed, according to the law of our constitution just mentioned, a degree of debility bearing a fair proportion to the previous protracted excitement. And it is moreover to be remembered, that the same quantity of ardent spirit will not, for a long time, produce the same exciting effect; so that there will be the same necessity for increasing the quantity that there is for using it at all. Let any candid person judge whether there is not an

alarming probability that such a course will grow into a confirmed habit of intemperance.

Methinks I hear some one say, “*that* is all speculation : we who have to labor, know from experience, that ardent spirit is necessary for us.” But how far, my friend, has your experience reached? You have tried labor *with* ardent spirit ; but perhaps you have never tried labor *without* it : and if so, then for aught you can tell, you might not only labor without it, but labor more comfortably and successfully than with it. But though *you* have not made the experiment, it has actually *been* made in many instances ; and it is believed the result has always been a firm conviction that this stimulus, for purposes of labor, is worse than useless. Many a man who once made daily use of it, supposing that it was essential to keep his bodily powers in a proper condition for labor, but who has since abandoned it altogether, will testify that he has in no respect been a loser, but in many respects, a gainer by the change ; that on the whole, he accomplishes not less than formerly, and with far greater pleasure and advantage.

But, perhaps it may be said by some who employ laborers, that however desirable the measure now proposed might be, it would be impracticable ; as persons could not be found who would consent to labor on such a condition. But the whole difficulty lies in the fact that there is an error in public sentiment ; and if those who employ laborers would take the right ground, the error would very soon be corrected. But how is it ever to be corrected, if no one dares to set his face against it ? But the difficulty which is here contemplated, would probably be found to be far less than most people imagine. It is confidently

believed that there are in the community, even now, many laboring men—men of principle and character—who would readily yield the use of ardent spirit from a regard to the cause of morality and virtue ; and there are yet many more, who might easily be induced to adopt a similar course, by a small addition to their wages. Let it be an object then, with all who employ laborers, to root out the mistaken notion that a man cannot work by the strength which God has given him, without, at the same time, being excited by intoxicating liquor. Let them appeal to the fact that others do labor without it, and even more successfully than when they used it. Let them exhibit this subject in its various important bearings ; and if necessary, let them increase the compensation as a premium upon temperance ; and let such a course as this become common, and I venture to say that such a change in public opinion will ensue, that there will soon be no difficulty in finding men to labor without strong drink. The result of such a course to the cause of temperance, could not fail to be most propitious.

Again: *All persons who are authorised by law to sell ardent spirits, are bound to use the right in such a manner, as shall not minister to the cause of intemperance.* This remark applies to merchants who are authorised to retail ardent spirits, but are forbidden to suffer their stores to be converted into tippling shops. It applies also to persons who keep public houses ; and in this case the law would seem to give somewhat wider scope for the exercise of discretion. The law of this commonwealth forbids the innkeeper to sell strong drink to apprentices or minors, residents in the place, without the special consent of their

guardians ; or to any person who is already, in any degree, under its intoxicating influence. Here, then, in this latter case, the innkeeper has to judge in respect to the actual condition of those who ask for ardent spirits; and if he is satisfied that any one has already drank to excess, he violates the law both of God and man, if, from any consideration, he yield to the request. How much better than a murderer is he who puts a drawn sword into the hand of a madman? And what shall be said of him, who, for the sake of enriching himself a few pence, puts the intoxicating cup to the lips of a man already intoxicated ?

And here I cannot but remark, that persons *who keep public houses*, occupy a station of great responsibility; and that the course which they adopt, must have a decisively favorable or unfavorable bearing upon the cause of temperance. Let the innkeeper take the stand which becomes a temperate and moral man ; let him refuse to sell strong liquors to minors and apprentices, except on the condition specified by law ; let him turn a deaf ear to the pleas of the drunkard, who has already taken so much that he can only stammer out his request for more ; and let him meet every effort of opposition by an appeal to the prohibitory statute ; and he will render a service to the public, which will make the whole community his debtors. But, on the other hand, let him disregard the prohibitions of law, and deal out ardent spirits indiscriminately, without respect to age, character, or circumstances, and there is great danger that his house, instead of being a peaceful retreat for the traveller, will become a haunt of drunkards, and a nursery for hell. From it there will go forth an influence in favor

of intemperance, which many temperate men might strive in vain to counteract.

I have spoken of the duty of those who are legally authorised to sell ardent spirits: let me add, before dismissing this topic, that *it belongs to the community to see to it that this duty is not neglected*. There is reason to believe, in respect to many of the abuses which exist in society, that they have been so long tolerated, that many people are not aware that there is any law against them: the law has slumbered so long, that they have forgotten even its existence. And in respect to the subject now under consideration, the difficulty is, not that there is no law, but that there is too little energy to execute it. Let any man, who is determined, by every means in his power, to suppress intemperance, take the laws which actually exist on this subject in his hand, and he will find himself armed with no contemptible weapon; and though transgressors may, at first, wag their heads in derision, he may soon give them cause to drop their heads with shame. I repeat, then—let the law be made to minister to the suppression of this vice: let it be executed prudently, but promptly and resolutely; and let those who affect to despise it, be made to sit at the feet of the magistrate, and learn the wholesome lesson, that *the way of transgressors is hard*.

I observe, further, that *it is the duty of parents to train their children, by every means in their power, to habits of temperance*. Who that knows any thing of the process by which human character is formed, does not know that the influence which parents early exert upon their children, is usually the most decisive human influence that

is ever exerted upon them? To apply this consideration to the subject before us—if the parent accustoms his child, from an early period, to witness the frequent and unnecessary use of ardent spirits, and the child is allowed to sip his part of the deadly potion; if he imbibes the notion, under parental authority, that the daily use of this stimulus is not improper; and if he is suffered to go abroad, and mingle in scenes in which it is freely used;—rely on it, that child is educated for a drunkard; and if he does not become one, it is only because the most cruel parental influence has been counteracted by the special providence or grace of God. But on the other hand, let the parent carefully withhold intoxicating liquors from his child, and never suffer them to be used in his family, except as a medicine; let him frequently inculcate lessons of strict temperance, as well as show himself a pattern of it; let him guard his child from those scenes in which the free use of ardent spirits is not only justified, but considered honorable; in a word, let it be his constant aim to induce him to avoid even the beginning of this evil; and it is almost certain, according to all principles of human calculation, that that child will grow into a temperate man; and the good influence of a parent's efforts will attend him, as no small security against intemperance, to the close of life.

We look to you then, ye parents, for the most efficient aid in the prevention of this alarming evil. We are glad when we are able to enlist the eloquence of the statesman, or the vigilance and energy of the magistrate, in this cause; but it is upon your fidelity in *preventing* the evil, that we build our strongest hopes. It is for *you* to decide whether

this poisonous tree, which has grown up among us, shall attain a still more gigantic growth, and be prolific in curses to generations to come, or whether it shall *now* be hewn down, and cast into the fire.

I remark, once more, under this article, that *it is the duty of every temperate man, to improve proper opportunities for expostulating with the drunkard, in respect to his destructive habit.* I am aware that when a man has fallen into this habit, his case is often—perhaps, too often, considered hopeless; though it must be acknowledged, judging from past experience, that the probability of reformation is but small. Still, there have been instances, in which confirmed drunkards have been completely reformed; and that too, in consequence of the seasonable and earnest expostulation of friends. So long as such cases are on record, or, it may be, have fallen under our observation, there is no reason why we should sit down in despair, even over the case of the most confirmed drunkard. If but one case of reformation had occurred, so that nothing more could be said than that reformation is not impossible, yet the object is so important, that, with no other ground of encouragement, we should be warranted in putting forth every possible exertion. Let every temperate man, then, as he may have opportunity, sound in the ears of the drunkard, a seasonable, affectionate, and solemn warning. Let him prudently select the most favorable season—a season when he is entirely free from his unnatural excitement—in which conscience will be most likely to do its office with fidelity, and the various considerations which are addressed to him, most likely to come home with effect. Let the admonition be administered in

the spirit of tenderness, and let it appear to be, and let it actually be, the genuine effusion of a benevolent heart ; and let it be preceded and followed by an earnest prayer to God that he will give it effect : and laboring in this way, he has reason to hope that he may save a soul from death, and hide a multitude of sins.

But the duty of which I have here spoken, is to be performed, not only towards confirmed drunkards, but also that class *who are just beginning to yield to temptation* ; who have actually entered the downward road, while yet, perhaps, they are unconscious of their danger. I know that there is, in some respects, more delicacy attending the discharge of this duty in the latter case than the former ; but let it be remembered, that there is a proportionably greater probability of success. Have you a friend or a neighbor, then, concerning whom suspicions are awake that he is becoming intemperate ? Decline not the painful office of admonishing him of his danger. Meet him at the very threshold of the temple of vice, and warn him that they who go in thither, return not again ; that they go to sacrifice themselves on an altar erected to the prince of darkness. And this seasonable admonition may not improbably be the means of arresting him at the commencement of his course. But wait a little, and you will have to encounter the strength of a confirmed habit ; you will address your arguments to an intellect half stupified by brutish indulgence, and able only imperfectly to estimate them ; you will make your appeals to a heart and conscience in which the sentiment of shame and the sense of guilt have become comparatively feeble : in short, the event *may* prove that your admonition comes too late.

I might mention several other ways in which temperate men may labor in the cause of temperance; particularly, by circulating tracts which are fitted to direct public attention to this object; and more generally, by their efforts to promote the cause of christian education, and to extend the influence of the gospel. But I shall waive these topics for the present, and proceed to the

III. Third and last division of the discourse, in which I am to *illustrate the obligation which rests upon every man to aid, according to his several ability, in suppressing intemperance, and in promoting the opposite virtue.*

I. We owe this to the cause of *humanity*. What though the intemperate man has degraded himself by his excess; what though he may have exiled himself from the virtuous and respectable part of community, and even from the affections of his nearest friends; yet let it not be forgotten, O man, that he sustains a common nature with thee: he is thy brother still; and as such, thou hast no right to shut up thy bowels of compassion against him. Would you fly to the relief of a fellow-mortal, who was asleep in a burning house? or would you hasten to save the traveller, who, at midnight, was approaching a fearful precipice? And if, in either case, you should refuse to sound the alarm, would you forfeit every claim to the common sensibilities of a man? What, then, must be said of him, who can contemplate the case of the drunkard without emotion; and can sit still till his body is in the grave, and his soul is in hell, and never even make an effort to reclaim him?

But the intemperate man is not an insulated being: he has *friends*; it may be a wife, or parents, or children;

every one of whom reaps from his misconduct, sooner or later, a harvest of tears. So long as he lives, he subjects them to constant mortification; and not unfrequently, perhaps, terrifies them with threats, or assaults them with blows: for strong drink can suspend the operation not of reason only, but of natural affection; thus doing more than to convert the man into a brute. Moreover, the family of the intemperate man are usually sooner or later destined to poverty; and sometimes the widowed mother, who would fain listen to some voice that should comfort her in her toils, is obliged to listen to the cries of her own children begging for bread. Is there a chord in your heart which vibrates to the notes of human wo; to the sufferings of decrepit old age, or weeping widowhood, or helpless orphanage? Go forth, then, and labor to banish intemperance from the world, and I doubt not that the blessing of many ready to perish, may come upon you. You do well when you give from your abundance to supply the wants of the destitute, or relieve the miseries of the wretched: but is it not a still nobler charity to prevent these wants and miseries, by preventing the crimes which occasion them?

2. We owe it to the cause of *patriotism* that we be faithful on this subject. Do you sincerely desire the prosperity of our beloved country? Do you contemplate with delight the extent of her territory, the fertility of her soil, the grandeur of her scenery, the rich variety of her natural advantages? Do you dwell with grateful emotions upon her history, tracing the wonderful interpositions of Providence in her favor, and marking the steps by which she has attained to her present elevation? And does ima-

gination sometimes hasten forward to coming ages, and bring back a report that your country's glory has spread itself over all lands, and that her institutions have exerted a mighty influence in the renovation of the world? Then I am sure you cannot sit down contented to see this goodly inheritance marred by the footsteps of Intemperance. You cannot behold this demon corrupting and degrading your countrymen, without being roused to vigorous opposition. As you love your country, then, and desire her prosperity; as you wish that her noble institutions may be perpetuated, and that it may be seen by the world, that though the floods should come and the winds beat, the fabric of her government cannot fall, being founded upon a rock; I exhort you to endeavor to arrest the progress of this deadly evil. And if you do this, not the present generation only, but posterity will bless you for having labored in the cause of their country's glory. But if there be no effectual resistance made, and our government should, ere long, go down to the grave of republican governments, I do believe that the hand which should write her epitaph, would inscribe, '*INTEMPERANCE one of the causes of her destruction.*'

Once more: We owe it to the cause of *religion* to be faithful on this subject. Are you a christian? Have you been not only baptized in God's holy name, but washed in a Saviour's blood, and are you waiting till your change come, to be admitted to heaven? Then you know, in some degree, the value of the soul. But the drunkard has a soul; a soul which must exist through interminable ages, but which the Bible has declared, cannot enter the kingdom of God. Will you not then, put forth every

effort to break up that destructive habit, and cause the spirit of God to visit that soul on an errand of mercy, and to convert, and fit it for heaven? It were a glorious triumph to recover *any* sinner from the error of his ways; but to be instrumental of raising one from *such* degradation to the paradise of God;—Oh, this is the highest honor which Jehovah ever puts upon a worm! Can you describe—can you conceive the ecstasy of the moment in which you should meet among the ransomed of the Lord, some soul, who, in consequence of your exertion, had not only been reclaimed from intemperance, but had *been washed, and justified, and sanctified, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the spirit of our God?*

Are you a christian? Then you cannot but desire that the church, and every branch of it, and every individual member, may be, what God requires they should be, *lights in the world*; thus diffusing a heavenly influence, and causing others to glorify our heavenly Father. But here, again, who does not know that intemperance has found its way even into the church; and that more frequently than any thing else—I may say, every thing else, it furnishes occasion for discipline, and brings a foul stain upon the Redeemer's cause? If then, christians, you will not put a reproach into the mouth of the ungodly, or cast a stumbling block in their path; if you desire, as individuals, or as a community, to exert the full amount of influence which you are bound to exert, as *a peculiar people*; I say, again, labor with all your might for the suppression of intemperance.

Are you a christian? Then it is your prayer to God that the cause of truth and piety may universally prevail.

You desire to see the gospel on the wings of the morning, till its healing influence shall be felt to the ends of the earth. But before this blessed consummation, thousands who are now asleep, must awake, in the spirit of benevolence, to this glorious enterprise. But in suppressing intemperance, you actually unclench the hand of avarice; you pour contributions into every treasury of the Lord; you increase the amount of that influence by which the kingdom of Christ is to become universal. Let the wealth which is now wasted in the support of this vice, even in our own country, be consecrated to this great object, and songs of thanksgiving, breaking from every land and every dwelling, would soon announce that the grand jubilee of the church had come. Go then, christian, and proclaim this fact to the world: tell it in the circles of the rich and the honorable, who are willing to labor for Christ: tell every christian whom you meet, that there is a fiend among us, perverting to purposes of destruction, the wealth which God gave to be consecrated to the cause of salvation. Let there be a united and vigorous effort to wrest from this usurper, treasures which, of right, belong to the church, and that effort shall be crowned with the blessing of Almighty God, and be the harbinger of that day, when holiness shall universally prevail on the earth—when a voice shall be heard from heaven, saying, *Behold the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God.*





